taken a series of steps, including establishment of a regulatory framework to address these concerns.

Loss of Wetlands

629. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENTS AND FOREST be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that we are on the verge of losing our wetlands in the country like Europe which lost 80 per cent of its wetland in the last century;

(b) if not, what are the details of the ongoing wetland projects receiving attention of Government for their preservation; and

(c) what are the details of the wetland projects being preserved under Ramsar Convention to which India is a signatory?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir. However the wetlands in the country are facing threats due to biotic factors like over-exploitation, encroachments, siltation and discharge of industrial effluents as also abiotic factors.

(b) The Ministry of Environment & Forests implements a scheme on Conservation & Management of Wetlands under which 71 wetlands covering 22 States to the country have been identified for undertaking conservation activities to check further degradation. Assistance on 100% grant basis is given for activities like survey & demarcation, protection, siltation control, pollution abatement catchment area treatment, de-weeding, biodiversity conservation, supplementary and alternate livelihood support for people dependent on wetlands, community participation and education & awareness.

An amount of Rs. 43.16 crores has been released from 1987-88 to 2005-06 for conservation and management of identified wetlands in the country for various conservation activities.

(c) So far, 25 sites have been identified from India as Ramrasr sites under Ramsar convention which include: Ashtamudi, Sasthamkotta & Vembanad-Kol (Kerala) Chilika Lake & Bhitarkanika Mangroves (Orissa), Bhoj Wetland (M.P), Deepor Beel (Assam) Harike, Kanjli & Ropar

(Punjab), East Calcutta Wetlands (W.B.), Keoladeo National Park & Sambhar Lake (Rajasthan), Kolleru Lake (A.P.), Loktak Lake (Manipur), Point Calimere (T.N.), Pong Dam Lake, Chandratal & Renuka (H.P.), Tsomorari, Wular, Surinsar - Mansar, Hokarsar (J&K), Rudrasagar (Tripura) and Uppar Ganga (U.P.).

Environment Sustainability Index

630 SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to the 2005 Enviornment Substainability Index, the quality of air and water in India is dismal and India ranks 101st of the 146 countries so studied;

(b) which are the 21 environmental categories that have been identified; and

(c) how Government are thinking of going ahead after looking at this Report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) A study conducted by a team of Scientists at Yale and Columbia Universities on the 2005 Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI), which integrates various data sets including past and present pollution levels, envionmental management efforts etc. has rated India at 101st position our of 146 countries.

(b) The ESI ranking is based on 21 indicators of Environmental Sustainability, a list of which is enclosed as statement (*see* below).

(c) A number of steps have been initiated to restore Environmental quality through reduction in air and water pollution, which *inter-alia* include the following:

* Notification of general and source specific Environmental standards;
* Introduction of cleaner fuels and improved vehicular technologies;
* Implementation of the Charter on Corporate Responsibility for Environmental Protection(CREP) for seventeen categories of polluting industries; and